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Historic Photos of Steamboats on the Mississippi

William E. Lass
Minnesota State University

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insights for historians in the future who will be writing about the longer term impacts of those events.

An important aspect of most of these essays is their accessibility. Readers don't need to be thoroughly versed in the biochemistry of water to understand points made about pollution; nor do they have to be hydrologists to understand the impact of flooding rivers. Given the importance of rivers in our lives — as sources of drinking water, as essential components of industrial processes, as the center of greenway corridors that provide respite and rejuvenation for our spirits — it is vital that we hear these voices and understand their insights.

Historic Photos of Steamboats on the Mississippi, by Dean M. Shapiro. Nashville: Turner Publishing Co., 2009. Photographs, notes on the photographs, glossary of steamboat terms, bibliography. x, 206 pp. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer William E. Lass is professor emeritus of history, Minnesota State University, Mankato. He is the author, most recently, of *Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway, 1819–1935* (2008).

Historic Photos of Steamboats on the Mississippi includes 197 black-and-white photographs of steamboats on the Mississippi River and its major tributaries. Many of the photographs include vivid images of river towns, rural landings, passengers, crew members, and scenery. Each photo is attractively presented on a 10" x 10" page.

Photographs are an important source of information about steamboats. Unfortunately, photography did not become popular until after steamboating peaked in the 1850s. Consequently, most steamboat photos, including those in this book, portray a declining activity.

Anyone interested in steamboats, which have a rich tradition in Iowa history, should enjoy these photographs. But those concerned about accurate history of steamboating would be well advised to ignore the one-page chapter introductions. Shapiro, perhaps because he was so smitten with the romance of steamboating, did not systematically research steamboating as a business. Consequently, he makes such colossal errors as placing the "Golden Age" of steamboating near the end of the nineteenth century and grossly understating the impact of railroads by the time of the Civil War. Such books as Mildred L. Hartsough's *From Canoe to Steel Barge on the Upper Mississippi* (1934) and William J. Petersen's *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi* (1937) would have provided a proper historical perspective. But Shapiro apparently did not use them.